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TAGS: [CASC](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [ST](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: ST. LUCIA - PM ON GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO COMBAT
RISING CRIME

REF: BRIDGETOWN 700

Classified By: A/DCM Clyde Howard for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: In a July 11 call on Ambassador Kramer, St. Lucia Prime Minister Kenny Anthony pleaded for the USG to delay toughening the language on crime in the St. Lucia Consular Information Sheet (CIS) until after national elections. To make his case, he highlighted his government's efforts to improve policing, including bringing in police officers from the UK. The Ambassador and Consul General made it clear that the USG's obligation to American citizens requires us to report the rising crime against tourists, but that the Embassy would be happy to assist St. Lucia in improving policing and would be willing to revisit the CIS in the future to reflect improved performance by the St. Lucian police. End Summary.

12. (C) In a July 11 meeting with Ambassador Kramer, St. Lucia Prime Minister Kenny Anthony and Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security Calixte George made their case for not changing the CIS to reflect rising crime in St. Lucia. (Note: In recent months, there has been a dramatic rise in crime targeting tourists in St. Lucia, including a particularly brazen rape and robbery against a European couple on a yacht anchored off the island (Ref A). End Note.) Anthony had heard rumors of an impending change and sought to delay it for six months. Being direct about his intentions, he explained that a new travel advisory from the U.S. would hurt his chances in national elections, which he plans to call in two months. (Note: Under St. Lucia's constitution, Anthony must call elections by December 2006 at the latest. End Note.) He then launched into a detailed explanation of improvements to the justice system in St. Lucia.

Drug Supply Goes Down - Violence Goes Up

13. (C) Anthony began by admitting a rise in violent crime. He said there were 33 homicides in all of 2005 but there have been 21 so far in 2006. The Prime Minister blamed much of the activity on improvements in drug interdiction, saying that as the supply of drugs coming up from Colombia and Venezuela has been reduced, the gangs have begun turning on each other. He also held up the "serious problem of corruption in the police force" to explain their inability to successfully curb the violence. Anthony also admitted his government has "no experience in gangs" and asked for DEA help in disrupting gang activity, citing the success of DEA and FBI programs targeting the heads of drug organizations in

Jamaica and Trinidad.

Efforts to Improve Policing

¶4. (C) According to Anthony, the St. Lucia government has built several new police stations, is training 65 to 120 new police officers each year, forcing new recruits to undergo extensive vetting, launching a "scooter patrol" to police less accessible areas, and has established large rewards for turning in illegal firearms. In addition, the country has asked for eight British police officers to take senior positions in the St. Lucia police force. Anthony also listed several other initiatives, such as a new fingerprinting system, updated evidence act, wiretap legislation, and a new prison (opened two years ago) as evidence of his government's focus on fighting crime. He also praised ongoing U.S., UK, and French (particularly from Martinique) law enforcement cooperation, as well as regional efforts such as Trinidad agreeing to extend its radar monitoring system (to detect drug boats) north to St. Lucia.

But Problems Remain

¶5. (C) The Prime Minister acknowledged that, despite his government's investments in law enforcement, crime was on the rise. He faulted a "serious problem of leadership in the police force" for the lack of results. The PM cited evidence that the economy was improving (13 percent unemployment, the lowest level in 15 years) to counter domestic critics who have described the rise in crime as the result of a faltering economy. Anthony seemed genuinely perplexed at the crime

problem and said St. Lucia has made more efforts to fight crime than any other country in the region. Anthony promised to have Minister George formally request FBI assistance in solving the three outstanding recent cases of crime against American citizens. (Note: LEGATT has offered assistance but needs a detailed formal request from the St. Lucians to take action. End Note.)

Private Security Necessary

¶6. (C) According to the Prime Minister, while his government seeks to improve the performance of the police force, there is only so much they can do; the private sector must improve hotel security. He offered to pay for a private security firm to conduct a full security audit of all hotel properties in St. Lucia and asked the Ambassador to suggest an American company qualified to conduct the audit. (Note: RSO will follow up on this request. End Note.) The Prime Minister revealed that, although he has met some resistance to the security audit idea from the hotel association on the island because of liability concerns, he plans to press ahead with or without their support.

Embassy Response

¶7. (C) Ambassador Kramer and Acting DCM/Consul General (CG) Howard responded to the Prime Minister's pleas by explaining the Embassy's duty to warn American citizens of rising crime in the Eastern Caribbean and reiterated that St. Lucia was not being singled out. The CG shared a draft text of the new CIS language with Anthony, who called the text "harsh" and asked for it to be toned down. The Ambassador and CG both emphasized that the primary problem is criminals targeting tourists, including American citizens. The CG said that the Embassy needs to put out this new information, but could revisit the text in several months if there has been noticeable progress in fighting crime against tourists.

Comment

18. (C) Despite the Prime Minister's entreaties, the Embassy cannot ignore the serious problem of crime against tourists in St. Lucia. Post recommends using the CIS language previously submitted (currently in the clearance process in the Department). According to law enforcement agencies at Post, rather than corruption, the main problem is that police are faced with new challenges to which they are seeking remedies. To help support this process, the Embassy plans to work closely with St. Lucian law enforcement and hotels to better protect American citizens on the island against crime.

As for the elections, the St. Lucian opposition and press have already bitterly attacked the Prime Minister over the lack of progress in fighting crime. It seems highly unlikely that the new CIS will make or break his reelection prospects.
KRAMER